

Message Text

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12

ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AEC-11 AID-20 IO-14 ACDA-19 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 DRC-01 SCI-06 FEA-02

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2423

INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE NEW DELHI 8814

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: TGEN

SUBJECT: TARAPUR REACTOR II

REF: SATE 141245

1. THE TARAPUR II REACTOR WAS SHUT DOWN ON FEBRUARY 25 FOR SCHEDULED REFUELING. ASIDE FROM A FEW MINOR FLAPS IN OBTAINING US-ORIGIN COMPONENTS (FUEL-ASSOCIATED ITEMS AND IN-CORE MONITORING DEVICES), THE REFUELING HAS GONE WELL, WITH RECOMMISSIONING ANTICIPATED IN THE FIRST HALF OF JULY. BECAUSE OF A GENERALLY FAVORABLE POWER SITUATION IN MAHARASHTRA UNTIL RECENTLY AND ONLY MODERATE PROBLEMS IN GUJARAT (THE STATES THAT TARAPUR SUPPLIES), THE PRESS HAS NOT SUBJECTED THE TARAPUR AUTHORITIES TO THE CRITICISM WHICH HAS NORMALLY BEEN THE CASE WHEN A REACTOR GOES DOWN FOR FUELING.

2. SINCE LAST WEEK, HOWEVER, THE POWER SITUATION IN MAHARASHTRA HAS WORSENER. THE STATE IS CURRENTLY SHORT 100 MEGAWATTS OF POWER (A SHORTFALL WHICH COULD EASILY BE MET BY TARAPUR REACTOR II). ACCORDINGLY, POWER CUTS OF 25 PERCENT HAVE BEEN EFFECTED IN VARIOUS SECTORS OF

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INDUSTRY. THE COMBINATION OF POWER SHORTAGES IN

MAHARASHTRA, THE WEAK PERFORMANCE OF THE MONSOON, AND DIMINISHING WATER RESERVOIRS MAKE THE REACTIVATION OF TAKRAIUR II OF PARTICULAR IMPORTANCE AT THIS TIME. ANY DELAY IN OBTAINING AT LEAST THE ONE KEY NUCLEAR SENSOR DESCRIBED IN REFTEL WILL RESULT IN A CORRESPONDING DELAY IN RECOMMISSIONING. FYI: THE PRESS, IN DESCRIBING THE MAHARASHTRA POWER SHORTAGE, HAS ALREADY NOTED THE FACT THAT THE SITUATION WILL EASE WHEN TAKRAIUR II IS RECOMMISSIONED QUOTE IN EARLY JULY END QUOTE.

3. WE AGREE ENTIRELY WITH THE NEED FOR THE USG TO OBTAIN ASSURANCES THAT THE GOI WILL NOT USE NUCLEAR MATERIALS OBTAINED FROM THE US FOR ANY TYPE OF EXPLOSION. WE ALSO AGREE WITH THE DEPARTMENT'S STRATEGY OF GIVING THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA PLENTY OF TIME TO PROVIDE THE ASSURANCE REQUESTED AND THEREFORE OF RELEASING THE SHIPMENT OF NUCLEAR MATERIALS WHICH WAS SLATED FOR EARLY DELIVERY. THE GOI DOES NOT MAKE DECISIONS SUCH AS THAT WE HAVE REQUESTED EASILY. (WE HAVE INQUIRED ABOUT THE MATTER IN MEA AND THEY DON'T EVEN KNOW THE WHEREABOUTS OF OUR LETTER TO THE INDIA AEC). THIS DECISION WILL UNDOUBTEDLY HAVE TO BE MADE BY THE PRIME MINISTER AND SUCH MATTERS ORDINARILY FILTER UP TO HER AFTER EXTENSIVE STAFF WORK BELOW.

4. WE URGE, THEREFORE, THAT JUST AS THE USG APPROVED ONE SHIPMENT OF FUEL WITH THE REMAINDER HELD BACK PENDING GOI ASSURANCES, IT NOW ALSO APPROVE THE SHIPMENT OF ONE SENSOR, WITH THE REMAINING THREE ALSO TO BE HELD BACK UNTIL THE ASSURANCES ARE GIVEN. THE ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF A MAJOR POWER SHORTAGE IN

INDIA'S LARGEST INDUSTRIAL STATE, AT A TIME WHEN POWER FOR TUBEWELLS AND AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION IS ALSO IN HIGH DEMAND, COULD BE QUITE SERIOUS. WE HOPE IT WILL NOT BE USG ACTIONS WHICH APPEAR AT LEAST PARTIALLY RESPONSIBLE.
SCHNEIDER

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